

Serial No. 10/780,113
Atty. Docket No. RANPP0352USA

Remarks

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Although issue is taken with the rejection of claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, claims 6 and 7 have been amended to refer to "separator member" instead of to "spacer member," thereby rendering the rejection moot.

Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and § 103

Claims 1-8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,756,096 to Harding ("Harding") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,749,821 to Simmons ("Simmons '821") and/or further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,217,501 to Simmons et al. ("Simmons '501"). Withdrawal of the art rejections is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

Harding discloses a supply of sheet stock material consisting of multiple plies provided on a stock roll. As noted by the Examiner, Harding does not disclose an end-of-web detector.

Simmons '821 discloses an end-of-web detector located upstream of a conversion assembly for detecting the end of a multi-ply web of sheet material. The Examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the Harding converter by equipping same with a plurality of sensors respectively associated with the separate infeed paths to detect the end of the respective web and generate a signal to a controller for stopping the feed motor. To arrive at this conclusion, the Examiner states that it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art.

More is involved here than the mere duplication of parts, however. As described in the background portion of the present application, operators of the converters (like those of Harding and Simmons '821) that use multi-ply paper have encountered a problem in that ends of the plies of a spent roll do not always align with one another. The end of one or more of the plies may be short of the end of another ply. This could arise from the original winding process where the multiple plies do not begin at the same point on the core of the stock roll. However, usually the problem arises from a

Serial No. 10/780,113
Atty. Docket No. RANPP0352USA

slight differential consumption rate of the multiple plies which causes a loop to form in one or more of the plies. When the trailing ends of the plies leave the core at the end of spent roll, the loop in the ply causes that ply to be longer than the other ply or plies. With the prior art end-of-web detector (Simmons '821), the sensor triggers an end-of-web command only after the longest ply has passed the beam path.

Quite frequently, the end of one or more of the plies may be so short that it has passed the end of the splicing plate by the time the converter is stopped, thereby making it very difficult, if not impossible, to splice to it a ply from a new stock roll. If the splice cannot be made, the operator has to remove the remainder of the stock material from the spent roll and thread the leading end of the stock material from the new roll through the machine, which is a much more difficult and time-consuming process than simply splicing the leading end of a new roll to the trailing end of a spent roll.

Neither Harding nor Simmons '821 addresses the above-described problem. In both Harding and Simmons '821, there is nothing to suggest that advantage can be gained by providing an end-of-web sensor for each ply.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the prior art rejections should be withdrawn.

New Claims

New claims 9-13 have been presented for favorable examination.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

By _____
Christopher B. Jacobs, Reg. No. 37,853

1621 Euclid Avenue
Nineteenth Floor
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 621-1113

Serial No. 10/780,113
Atty. Docket No. RANPP0352USA

CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL

I hereby certify that this paper, and any documents referred to as attached or enclosed, is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office (fax no. 571-273-8300) on the date shown below.

Date: September 6, 2005

Christopher B. Jacobs
Christopher B. Jacobs

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